

Privacy Information

General Authorization for Collection and Release of Information (Electronic Application)

Rights Under c. 66A (FIPA)

The Massachusetts Fair Information Practices Act (FIPA), G.L. c. 66A §§ 1 - 3, provides that individuals have a variety of rights when a government agency collects and uses "personal data" regarding the individual in a program. At the same time the law imposes various responsibilities on the agency which collects and uses the personal data.

In Massachusetts, Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) administer the State-Aided Public Housing program under supervision of the Department of Housing and Community Development. Applicants submit applications to the LHAs and provide personal data about themselves and their household members in order to permit the LHAs to find that applicants and their household members are eligible for State-Aided Public Housing and that they have not engaged in disqualifying past behavior. In addition to personal data provided by applicants and their household members, the LHAs also seek out additional personal data relevant to the findings which the LHAs must make.

A written paper application may be made directly to an LHA or an application may be made to one or more LHAs electronically. Both the paper and electronic applications will contain personal data and before making any decision on an application, the housing authority will be required to secure additional relevant personal data about the applicant and his, her or their household. In order to collect and hold such personal data, the LHA(s) need authorization from the applicant and each household member.

In order to submit an electronic application, an applicant provides information, including personal data into an electronic application on a computer system operated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services known as the Virtual Gateway. Once the application is complete, the applicant will then sign the application electronically and, thereby certify the accuracy of all information, including personal data, in the electronic application. The Virtual Gateway system will then transmit the electronic application to each LHA which the applicant has specified. The LHA will then secure additional information and render a decision on the application.

The electronic application data will be stored in a database and may be used to create reports, developed by Virtual Gateway employees, that will be provided to DHCD and other government agencies. These reports, coupled with information collected by the LHAs, will be used in the administration of the State-Aided Public Housing Program, and used in the prevention of program noncompliance, fraud or abuse.

I, _____ (applicant/household member), do hereby authorize each LHA listed in the electronic application to hold and use the information, including personal data, in the application and to collect, hold and use other relevant information, including personal data, for purposes of the State-Aided Public Housing program. DHCD and other government agencies may also hold and use the information in the application and the information collected by the housing authorities for purposes of administration, verification and enforcement of the program and its requirements. Employees of EOHHS are also authorized to hold and use the information in the application for the purposes set out herein.

The personal data about each applicant and household member will be held by the LHAs in accordance with FIPA, DHCD regulation (760 CMR 8.00) and this consent. The personal data will not be used for any purposes other than those specified herein. I, or my authorized representative, have a right to inspect and copy any personal data collected and held about me by any entity listed herein unless access to the data is prohibited by law or judicial order. Any denial of a request for access, the reasons therefore, and the right of and procedure for appeal will be provided to me in writing. I, or my authorized representative, may also object to the collection, maintenance, dissemination, use, accuracy, completeness or type of personal data collected and held about me. If my objection is made to an LHA I should address my written objection, which shall include details of the objection, to the LHA's Personal Data Officer who will investigate my objection and either make a correction or make my objection part of the file. If I am dissatisfied with the result, I may then file a written grievance under the LHA's grievance procedure. If my objection is made to DHCD or other government agency, I may file your written objection, which includes details of the objection, to DHCD's Personal Data Officer, who will investigate my objection, and either make a correction or make my objection part of the file. Such written objection should be mailed to DHCD, Bureau of Housing Management, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 300, Boston, MA 02114, ATTN: Personal Data Officer.

I, if the applicant, will be providing an electronic signature on my electronic application. By taking the steps specified on the application for signing electronically I will have signed the application to the

same legal effect as if I had signed a paper application. By so signing I will certify that all the information on the application is complete (unless otherwise specified) and accurate. The penalties for submitting inaccurate information will apply to the electronic application so signed.

I have read and understood the foregoing and give my authorization for the collection, holding and use of my personal data with knowledge of my rights and obligations. I understand that a photocopy of this statement including a photocopy of the signature affixed thereto is as valid as the original.

Applicant/Household Member Signature

Date

Print Name

VG Application #

Housing Assistance Provider Witness
Signature

Date

Print Name

VG User #